

## Sharon Core

3 Aug — 22 Sep 2018 at the Tracey Morgan Gallery in Asheville, United States

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Sharon Core. Courtesy of Tracey Morgan Gallery

Tracey Morgan Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of works from New York photographer Sharon Core. The artist creates extensively researched explorations of the living still life. In both series exhibited, *1606-1907* and *Understory*, we see the play between the illusion of a painting and the truth of a photograph set amidst the natural cycles of decay and renewal. This will be Core's first show with the gallery.

In *1606-1907*, begun in 2011 and ongoing, Core references a 300 year span of works from the pictorial convention of the floral still life, ranging from Dutch masters of the 1600s to modernist works of the early 1900s. Core is committed to absolute authenticity in her photographs, cultivating many of the plant and flower species in her works from heirloom rose grafts, bulbs, and seeds. These spectacular photographs evoke both the history which they reference alongside the fragile impermanence of the subjects. The longevity of flora and fauna in art history starkly contrasts with the fleeting nature of the subject itself, and these works live in a lush middle ground between reality and depiction. The resulting constructions are meticulous, vibrant, and somehow both fresh and familiar.

In *Understory*, Core moves beyond the ordered, meticulous, and formal tabletop arrangements into the environment itself. In lieu of the stark backdrop and tabletop, Core created a landscape inside of a geodesic dome/greenhouse on her land in the Hudson Valley. For this parallel landscape, Core chose a variety of symbolic and psychotropic plants, a fig tree, collections of decaying wood, moss, insects, reptiles and amphibians. Influenced by the 17th century Dutch painter Otto Marseus van Schrieck who cultivated a bog for his “forest floor” paintings (or *sottobosco*), Core created her own quasi-natural location and living studio for photography. The term *understory* is used to describe the flora and fauna below the canopy of trees in a forest, essentially the low lying vegetation and decaying matter from which all new life emerges. Through her interaction with the chaos of decomposition in these images, she inches closer to our notions of disordered “reality.” She creates these works through curating what she chooses to cultivate and bring into her engineered space, deeply interacting with the hidden corners and small pockets of the living studio. We do still see the deep, lush palette of her earlier work, the sharp, cinematic lighting, and the confrontation of our understanding of photography as simply a medium for documentation. The historical implications and tensions of both these and her earlier work wonderfully contrast with the temporal nature of her subjects, creating a captivating narrative, both conceptually and aesthetically.

Sharon Core was born in New Orleans in 1965. She holds a BFA in painting from the University of Georgia and an MFA in Photography from Yale University. Her work is in the permanent collections of numerous museums, including the Guggenheim Museum, J. Paul Getty Museum, Yale University Art Gallery, Princeton Art Museum, Cleveland Museum of Art, and Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, among others. In 2012 Radius Books published *Early American*, Core’s first monograph.